

in the same multi-layer display creates three-dimensional effects along a payline, such that the payline is then three-dimensional.

[0083] Moving next to FIG. 7C, such an application is shown in the form of one exemplary set of front screen, back screen and resulting combination screen presentations that can be used to form an alternative simulated display of virtual gaming reels that are used in conjunction with additional game designations on a separate display screen. As shown in this particular screen set application 296, a front screen 218a is used to provide one or more additional game designations to go with the virtual reels presented on back screen 218c. The combination of front screen 218a and back screen 218c results in a single visual presentation or “MLD result” that is provided on multi-layer display 226. In this particular illustration, the additional game designations on front screen 218a are added “wild” bars that can be used in the place of an overlaid reel symbol on back screen 218c. When used, such “wild” bar designations serve to replace the overlaid reel symbol with a wild bar or other similar symbol that can be any or almost any other reel symbol for that given game, with the use of such wild symbols being generally well known in the art.

[0084] As will be readily appreciated, such additional game designations might be any of a variety of other items, such as, for example, an award “multiplier” and/or bonus game provision or trigger. An award multiplier can result in, for example, any payline that includes the affected reel symbol having any applicable win or payout for that game be multiplied by the provided multiplier number. A bonus game trigger can involve, for example, an overlaid symbol or designation that results in the award of a bonus game if the affected underlying reel symbol is the right type of reel symbol. In general, the overlay of a sheet or screen of additional game designations can result in an exciting three-dimensional presentation atop a reel type or wheel type wager-based game. Such additional game designations can be made to animate and/or interact with any affected underlying reel symbols, so as to provide a more entertaining experience for a player.

[0085] In various versions of such an additional game designation embodiment, such additional game designations may require an added payment or wager by the player in order for such additional game designations to be active or take effect. For example, the “wild” bars of screen set application 296 may be inactive if a player does not add an extra wager or otherwise pay for them. In such instances where an added payment or wager is required and not paid, then the underlying game may simply be played as usual. In such instances, the additional game designations may or may not be shown. If shown, such additional game designations can be provided in a lightened or “ghost” form, such that the player can see what he or she might have won if such additional game designations had been paid for. Further additional game designations having other functions may also be provided, and such additional game designations may be provided alone or in combination with each other, as desired. For example, a given game might include an optional payment or wager for “wild” bars, another optional payment or wager for “multiplier” designations, and still another optional payment or wager for “bonus” designations. In the event that a player pays for all

three of these items, then a front display having one or more of each active item may be generated for a respective game play.

Method of Use

[0086] It will be readily appreciated that the method and illustrative flowchart provided herein are merely exemplary, and that the present invention may be practiced in a wide variety of suitable ways. While the provided flowchart may be comprehensive in some respects, it will be readily understood that not every step provided is necessary, that other steps can be included, and that the order of steps might be rearranged as desired by a given manufacturer, as desired.

[0087] Specifically, FIG. 8 illustrates a flowchart illustrating one exemplary method of presenting a three-dimensional payline on a processor-based gaming machine according to one embodiment of the present invention. Such a method serves to illustrate an automated process whereby a wager-based game using a three-dimensional payline is administered and presented. After start step 300, a first process step 302 involves providing a wager-based gaming machine having a multi-layer display. Such a gaming machine can be any of the exemplary gaming machines as described above. Process step 304 then involves accepting a wager from the player, process step 306 involves accepting a game related input from the player, and a game play is then initiated at process step 308.

[0088] After game play is initiated at step 308, a first three-dimensional payline is determined at process step 310. A second three-dimensional payline may then be determined at process step 312, and it will be readily appreciated that further three-dimensional paylines may also be determined, as may be appropriate given the particular game played. Such payline determinations can involve a number of factors, including one or more default settings and/or one or more settings or selections made by the player of the game. In addition, one or more of such three-dimensional payline determinations may be made at another time, such as after the game related input is accepted from the player at step 306.

[0089] The method then moves to process step 314, where the wager-based game including one or more three-dimensional paylines is presented. The method then finishes at end step 316. Of course, additional steps may also apply to such a process, as may be desired. Such steps may include, for example, the determination of whether a game outcome is a winning outcome, as well as the award of a monetary payment to the player in the event of such a winning outcome.

[0090] Although the foregoing invention has been described in detail by way of illustration and example for purposes of clarity and understanding, it will be recognized that the above described invention may be embodied in numerous other specific variations and embodiments without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics of the invention. Certain changes and modifications may be practiced, and it is understood that the invention is not to be limited by the foregoing details, but rather is to be defined by the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A processor-based gaming machine that accepts a wager, plays a game based on the wager, and grants a payout based on the wager-based game result, comprising:

an exterior housing arranged to contain a plurality of internal gaming machine components therein;